

## Pastor Roy's sermon from April 7, 2019 (Lent 5)

We hear Isaiah say, "I am about to do a new thing, now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?" Who is doing the new thing? Us or God?

So much of what happens in the church and in our lives feels like it is up to us. It is our job to make things happen. When we hear this we instinctively feel that **we** need to do something new. Maybe even that we need to convince God to go along with our idea, to bless it.

"I am about to do a new thing, now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?" It is right before our very eyes!

So we don't have to find God's new thing. We don't have to make it work in our favor. We are invited to see what God is doing and give ourselves over to it—even though we are a bit in the passenger seat.

Or. . .we can deny it. We can insist on ignoring, resisting God's new thing.

Now all this new thing stuff is not just major new things. We constantly find ourselves up against new things. Ultimately they are all God's invitation to trust, to wait, to hope, and to rest.

There are big new things that affect everyone. There are little ones that seem to affect only me and you. In all of it, the Spirit is pleading with us to be flexible. To trust that what is going on around us is not just random stuff happening. God is doing a new thing—new things.

Psalms 126 today reminds us that God's new things have already happened and brought us great joy. And that they will continue to happen. Verse 5 reminds us that there is waiting between the sowing with tears, and reaping with songs of joy.

We see the new thing. We even participate in the new thing. And usually we must wait, patiently, for each new thing to grow into greater fullness.

To be quite honest, we often don't like the new thing. We want it to go away and leave us alone. We want the old, comfortable, familiar way to come back and stay with us a while. But ultimately, when the new thing comes, our only choice is to live into it. To make space for God's Spirit to bring it to life, to bring the joy. The joy will come if we remain open, if we give it a chance.

Even when the new thing was the resurrection of Christ, it was new and it took some time for them to adjust to the newness and to figure out what it all meant. Paul learned the joy of the resurrection. So much so that he counted everything a loss compared to the joy of knowing Christ the risen Lord. The new thing became the only thing that matters, ultimately. For Christians, the new thing of the resurrection enables us to respond to all the little new things with courage and deep joy.

Each new thing, gives us the chance to sharpen our faith that the life of God is sufficient to carry us, to fill us with hope and courage. To live into our trust, each moment, each challenge we know.

What new thing is God doing in your life? Remember, we don't have to make the new thing happen, we are given courage to trust that God will carry us through it and as time goes, bring us new joy. All because we are learning to trust. Thanks be to God.